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THE MINSTREL

AND

OTHER POEMS.

BY

B. A. EATON.

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TO

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CONTENTS.

The Minstrel 7
The Phantom Ship 18
The Dying Lover 20
Serenade Song 23
I met her at a rustic ball 24
Morning in the Bay 26
Nature's Altars 27
Days of Boyhood 29
Adieu, old halls 30
'T is sweet to see the mellow hue 31
Within a coral grove 32
To a Lady Weeping 33
The Gathering Storm 34
Lines to * * * 35
Autumn Leaves 36
St. Helena 37
To Ada, in Tears 38
Contentment 39
The Steersman's Song 40
Sea Requiem 41
The Madonna 42
The Mother's Farewell 43
To the Offing Waters 45
My halls, the home of peace, till thou 46
Thine eyes of blue 47
Alethe and Alciphron 49
To * * * 50
Columbus 51
To Inez 52
Hamlet's Grave 53
To —— 53
To —— 54

THE MINSTREL.

I come not with the voice of praise,
To him who kindly shields my lays;
An humble bard, unknown to fame,
Can add no honors to that name.
The flowers that deck this proffered wreath,
Were gathered from the fenceless heath,
Perchance to wilt and fade away,
The brief ephemera of a day;
They boast not of exotic worth,
'T was nature wild that gave them birth.

'T is now some half-score years or more,
Since, musing by the lone sea-shore,
I listened to a minstrel's lay,
That hailed the rising god of day.
Flushed slightly with the morning's hue,
Before me lay the ocean blue,
Whose crests of white, thus neighboured, gave
Three colors blended in each wave.
I 've seen the beauteous dolphin die,
And marked the rich Cubaian sky
When such bright hues were rainbowed there,
As make the painter's skill despair;
But this was sweeter far to me,
For here I saw the flashing sea,
And heard its living minstrelsy.

The time, the place, the magic scene,
The vault above of blue serene,
The pure, untainted, bracing air,
The wild sea-birds that hovered there,
The ocean's anthem, and the lay
Of him who hailed the gladsome day, —
Kindled, with rapture, in my heart,
A reverence for the minstrel's art.
He blessed the bright Apollo's rays,
And hymned the tribute of his praise;
And touched upon a thousand themes,
That revel in a poet's dreams.
We parted, and there met no more,
Though oft I went to that lone shore,
That, haply, I again might hear,
The music which so charmed my ear.
At length, just at the blush of morn,
While roaming by yon verdant lawn,
I saw my chance-companion there; —
Enraptured o'er his harp he hung,
There was a wildness in his air,
As thus in accents clear he sung: —

O'er the fresh verdure of the grassy plain,
There softly steals a low, melodious strain;
The viewless minstrels of the sky are there,
With harp-strings floating on the balmy air;
The wild flowers ope their petals at the sound,
Which spirit-like is breathing all around,
And rosy tinges kiss yon swan-like cloud,
As Phœbus rises from his ocean-shroud.
Awake! awake! he comes on wings of light,
To seize the sceptre of departing night,

Arise! come forth! the hills are bathed in gold,
And dreaming flowers their dewy lids unfold.

They come, they come, the smiling throngs appear,
The early melody of birds to hear;
Here rosy health imparts her gifts divine,
To those who circle round the tempting shrine,
And beauty gathers crimson from the sky,
While joy's bright language sparkles in her eye.
In distance, bathed by morning's liquid light,
Arcadian landscapes mirror on the sight;
Here have I loved, beneath the shading trees,
To breathe the fragrance of the freighted breeze,
And teach my harp, though rude its humble lays,
To trill the feeble tribute of my praise.

Thou art our heritage, romantic lawn!
Where songsters carol at the birth of morn,
Where glittering dew-drops charm the raptured eye,
And seem like spangles from the jewelled sky,—
As though the shades in hastening to the west,
Had dropped upon our earth their starry vest.
Most beautiful! a grove on either side
The poor man's garden, and his honest pride;
Here he may come when day's hard task is done,
And mark the glory of the setting sun,—
Behold him slowly sink into the west,
Like some good Christian to the realms of rest,
Smiling in death;—and drink his parting ray,
The plighted token of a new-born day;—
At eve behold the lovely orb of night,
That o'er the picture sheds her silver light,
While gleaming spheres, which gem the arch of blue,
Impart their trembling rays to gild the dew.

'T is sweet to wander o'er thy airy plain,
When Spring dissolves old Winter's icy chain,
To mark the speed with which the shooting blade
Renews its emerald to adorn the glade, —
Behold the spreading leaves of budding trees,
Wave their green tresses to the gladdening breeze,
And watch the opening lids of flowrets wild,
As fair to manhood now, as when they smiled,
In all their lowly beauty, on the boy
Who hailed their coming with his shout of joy!

Then Summer comes; how like a blushing bride!
Whose happy mother views the child with pride,
Whose only jewels are her native charms,
And yields her spotless to the bridegroom's arms.
Then balmy zephyrs fan the blooming flowers,
And gayly wanton 'mid the leafy bowers;
At many a shrine they breathe their mellow lays,
And gather fragrance where they lavish praise;
And join the chorus of the feathered throng
While busy echo faintly mocks the song.
Around thy margent domes of taste arise, —
Bright "spires of faith" are pointing to the skies,
And winding Charles is gliding in the west,
With heaven's pure azure gleaming on his breast.

When Autumn comes, with all her gorgeous dyes,
And purple glory of her evening skies,
The season's hectic tinges every leaf,
And warns young beauty that her reign is brief;
Decaying Autumn! lovely e'en in death,
How sweet and plaintive is thy dying breath!
The low winds murmur 'mid thy fallen leaves,
And parent nature for her offspring grieves;

The harvest fragrance floats upon the air,
And zephyrs whisper farewell to the fair,
Their gentle pinions fan thy fevered brow
And Winter's mantle falls upon thee now.

* * * * *

Scene of my boyhood's sports! here voices shrill
Of joyous school-mates echoed on the hill;
Here young ambition fired the youthful breast
In games of strength and speed to lead the rest;
Here soared the kite, the bounding ball was tost,
And here the mimic field was won and lost.
When tired of play, they sought the cooling shade,
Beneath yon aged elm that gems the glade,
To list while tales of fairy elves were told,
And noble deeds by daring knights of old.
They gave to tales of patient worth distrest
The generous tribute of the swelling breast;
And when oppression yielded to his foe,
Their eyes would glisten, and their bosoms glow.
Stern Winter too had charms to lure them here,
He gave them snow their mimic forts to rear;
Here many a stormy battle has been fought,
The strong destroying what the feeble wrought;
Then truce is made, — the little warfare ends, —
"Huzza! my lads, we all again are friends!"
Now, fear-defying, down the shelving snow
The infant Jehus like a torrent go,
Then tug, and toil, till each the top regains
For "one course more," and think not of the pains.
When yon small lake was hushed in icy sleep,
The joyous urchins o'er its breast would sweep;
Then shrilly rung the agile skater's steel,
And shout and laugh in ceaseless strains would peal,

And when some hapless fellow got a fall,
His sympathy would be — the laugh of all;
" Up, up, and take another! cease those frowns;
This life, my boy, is full of 'ups and downs,'
Away! away! now join the merry group,
And shout in chorus with their thrilling whoop!"
In scenes like these the happy hours flew by,
And memory now recalls them with a sigh.

He paused; just then a lovely bird
With spreading wings of purple dye
Among the shady foliage stirred,
And caught his quick-observing eye.
How often will a simple sound, —
A trifle in the scene around, —
The flight of birds, — a falling leaf, —
A tone of gladness or of grief, —
Give birth unto a train of thought,
With past associations fraught.
Forgotten joy, forgotten pain,
Which long, long since have passed away,
Will come to memory again,
As though 't were only yesterday.
And oft some thoughtless, careless word,
Which scarce we heeded when we heard,
Now makes the pulse beat quick and high,
" Or clouds the brow, or fills the eye."
And thus the minstrel mused awhile,
Around his lips there played a smile,
His bosom swelled, — he struck his lyre,
And sung with all a patriot's fire: —

Fair Boston! from that bright and glorious hour
When eagle-freedom burst the tyrant's power,

And flew to thee, her safety-ark, for rest,
And dried her tear-drenched pinions on thy breast,—
Thy name is hallowed on our history's page,
And will be handed down from age to age.
Here Otis, Quincy, Adams, Hancock, taught
Our proud oppressors that the bonds they wrought
Were never on our wrists to leave their stains;
Then quickly from our limbs fell off the chains,
Like those vile bonds the blest Apostles broke,
When in their prison-cell the angel spoke.
Then freedom shouted, and the welkin rung
With joyous voices as they proudly sung,—
"Columbia! our home! thy soil is free!"
And echo bore the lay beyond the sea;
The despot trembled on his crumbling throne,
And tyrant power with coward fear did groan.
Then freedom's flag was there in pride unfurled,
Oh, may it wave for ever o'er the world!
Blest ark of freedom! when a garden wild,
And all thy hills and vales with verdure smiled,
The hardy hunter claimed thee for his home,
And wished from thy wild beauties ne'er to roam;
He built his hut beside the silver spring,
And thy old woods with his glad voice did ring;
To his pledged word his heart was ever true,
And base ingratitude he never knew;
Erect in pride he launched the skilful spear,
And bore in triumph home the stricken deer;
Or plied in yonder bay his light canoe,
And from the teeming waves a tribute drew:
When high in wrath around him raged the storm,
He braved its fury with unbending form,

And fix'd upon the bolts which rent the sky
The eagle gaze of his unblenching eye;
He saw fair nature veil her lovely charms,
But felt secure within her shielding arms.
Upon this spot, within the sylvan shade,
The Indian lover wooed his dark-eyed maid,
Hymned his wild song unto the listening fair,
And to kind nature's God poured forth his prayer.
They all are gone! they mingle with the earth,
The once green hunting-ground, which gave them birth;
Their fires are out, their voices heard no more,—
Their souls no doubt have found a brighter shore.
Yet history plucks them from dark Lethe's wave,
And the fair Drama spreads her arms to save;
Their noble chiefs in Metamora live,
And claim the tribute which the manly give;
Our pulses quicken, when that chief we see
Nerve his strong arm to set his people free;
Our tears fall fast on Nahmaokee's grave,
Who could not live to be "the white man's slave."
Thus by her magic spell the Drama draws
The tearful tribute and the loud applause;
Her trumpet-voice doth give past deeds new birth,
And calls death's slumbering victims back to earth.
The quiver-bearer of the snowy steed
No longer robs his victims of their meed;
The hero, patriot, statesman, monarch, sage,
Rush from their graves and tread the classic stage;
Renew their deeds of glory or of crime,
And bid defiance to oblivious time.
Hail! lovely nymph, thou bright-eyed Grecian maid,
We bid thee welcome to our western shade;
To wreath thy brow we 'll cull our history's page,
And light with smiles thy evening walk — the stage.

But thou hast foes! and who? — the tyrant power
That crushes freedom in her helpless hour;
The wary knave that to all meanness stoops,
To fill his coffers and secure his dupes;
The canting hypocrite — the worthless sot —
And the seducer vile, who dares to blot
The virgin page, where innocence appears,
And fill a parent's eyes with shame's hot tears.
These are thy *foes*, fair Drama, *these!* rejoice!
For *virtue* in thy cause lifts up her voice.

He ceased, and slowly walked away,
Unconscious that his careless lay
Had found a hearer. Months flew by, —
We met beneath a wintry sky;
Alas! alas! how changed the scene!
The trees had doffed their robes of green,
And all around was dull and drear,
It was the funeral of the year!
O'er his high brow a shade was cast
His lay was sadder than the last;
Upon the earth his cloak he flung,
And raised his eyes as thus he sung: —

Sweet lawn! for thee I sweep my harp once more,
And wave my kerchief on the parting shore;
Thy beauties now have fallen in the sere,
And solemn dirges moan the dying year;
Thou art an emblem of our changeful life,
Whose early spring with pleasing hope is rife;
Soon, one by one, our green leaves drop away,
Till death's bleak winter, chills the germs of May;
The ties of love are rudely rent apart,
And all the tendrils which cling round the heart.

The husband, wife, child, lover, mistress, friend,
Must, in the cheerless tomb, their journey end.
The soul still lives ! and wings her eager flight
Beyond the sable realms of earthly night ;
Soaring, unshackled, in the fields of space
She bears the banner of redeeming grace !
In robes of spotless white, she floats along,
And breathes upon her harp the Angel's song.
Oh ! there in bliss upon that golden shore,
Shall joyous kindred meet to part no more !
Hope ! beaming hope ! my spirit clings to thee,
And fearless waits the hour that sets it free !
A last adieu ! beloved but blighted lawn,
Thy race is finished, all thy charms are gone.
Thus sinks the soul in death's cold night away,
To wait the dawning of Eternal Day !

The minstrel hied him from the scene,
His last and dirge-like farewell o'er ;
In Winter's snows, and Summer's green
I 've sought, but ne'er have seen him more.
I little thought at parting then
We never were to meet again,
Or that the spot he loved so well
Had then received his last farewell.
One morning, on the bare cold ground,
A stranger's stiffened corse was found ;
Unsheltered and unknown he died,
A broken harp was by his side.
Crowds came and gazed and passed away,
And many an eye betrayed a tear ;
But who that corse not one could say,
Though many viewed the features near,

Where the discerning eye might trace
Hopes blighted, in the meaning face.
He lay so calm in that sweet sleep,
'T were sinful for his fate to weep.
Yet tears are shed, we know not why, —
Such is the power of sympathy.
It boots not now to ask his name,
Nor what he was, nor whence he came;
That secret cannot be revealed,
That mystery the grave hath sealed.

THE PHANTOM SHIP.

On the deep, before a storm,
Oft the dim and distant form
Of a tall, black ship doth glide,
In whose wake the waves divide;
Swiftly on she speeds her way,
Dashing through the briny spray,
Whilst the ocean-monsters flash
By her prow at every dash;
And the wild winds of the sea
Peal their mournful minstrelsy;
Through the creaking cords they moan
With a wild unearthly tone;
Echoes catch the hollow lay,
Which they swiftly bear away
To the ocean's golden shore,
Where the snowy waters pour;
Seamen in their watch at night
See her by the pale stars' light
Glancing by with swelling sail,
Heedless both of shout or hail.

"Ship-a-hoy!" they trembling cry,
As the phantom passes by;
Loud the trumpet's hailing rings,
But an answer never brings,
Save what echo doth employ
With a mimicked "Ship-a-hoy!"

Fleetly o'er the gleaming tide
Does the fearful vessel glide;
Onward, onward, still she speeds,
Neither winds nor waves she heeds.
Through the mist and through the foam
Reckless does that vessel roam,
Like a wild, affrighted deer
Fleeing from the hunter's spear!

When the moon is on the deep,
Where the glassy waters sleep,
In the dim horizon's light,
At the utmost reach of sight,
Web-like shrouds and spars on high
Shadow on the distant sky.
Once I saw that fearful thing
Roaming on her lightning wing;
Dark clouds rested on the sea,
She was close upon our lea.
Years since then have winged their flight,
Memory still retains that sight;—
Rushing headlong o'er the waves,
As if to shun the sea-trough graves,
Leaving there no foamy trail,—
Past us flew the maniac sail.

THE DYING LOVER TO HIS MISTRESS.

Though I have loved thee, nay, adored!
Yet never has that treasured word,
Which my fond soul in secret swore,
Escaped my trembling lips before.
A gnawing grief in silence feeds
Upon this heart which inly bleeds;
That quenchless flame my bosom fills,
Which ne'er relieves but when it kills.
Though wild to thee my words appear,
And stern the eye which sheds no tear,—
Unheeded, slighted though he be,
Whose only love is fixed on thee,—
And though this heart, by anguish torn,
Ne'er gains thy love, but moves thy scorn,—
Forever trembling, near or far,
It points to thee,—its polar star!
'T is said that absence can abate
The deepest love, the fellest hate;
But I have crossed the bounding main,
And found *my* bonds "a lengthening chain."
A wanderer on a distant shore
I viewed the scenes of classic lore,
And mused in grief on that dark wave
Which rolls o'er victim Sappho's grave,
And hymned a requiem o'er the bed,
Where slighted love reclines her head,

Yet still my cheek by sorrow sere,
Which often claimed, — ne'er felt a tear.
Then rose the frenzied wish to be
A sleeper in that peaceful sea.
Still, still my heart, where'er I strayed
On ocean's wave, or by the shade
Of clustering woods, — for ever turned
To her I loved, to thoughts that burned ;
And distance only fanned the flame,
Which death alone could quench or tame.
For that I 've often prayed, and now,
Behold ! 't is stampt upon my brow.

'T were vain to ask thee to reveal
In words, cold words, what I could feel
By one quick glance from thy dark eye, —
On that was staked the fatal die ;
I asked the eager question *there*,
It answered ! — *then* I learnt despair ;
My bursting heart and burning brain
Concealed in pride from thee their pain.
Hark ! hear'st thou not the village bell ?
My soul doth tremble at its knell,
For soon I feel 't will peal for me,
Its rude and hollow minstrelsy.
My coward heart, I know not why,
Although it wishes, fears to die.
The grave is narrow, cold, and dark, —
To be no more ! the vital spark
For ever quenched ? — it cannot be,
Death only sets its victim free.
But though again we meet not here,
Hope whispers of a brighter sphere,

Beyond the grave's sepulchral night,
Where our freed spirits may unite !

* * * * *

He died. Above his humble grave,
The tall rank grass doth gayly wave ;
The village maidens often stray
To that lone place at close of day,
And read upon the sculptured stone,
The lover's fate with plaintive tone ;
And shed their generous tears above
The grave of him, who died for love,
Where now lies sleeping by his side,
The maid he loved, — for whom he died.
'T is near the sea, whose moaning surge
Peals forth a wild, perpetual dirge.

SERENADE SONG.

Girl of the laughing eye, awake!
The moon shines brightly from on high
And bathes in light the silver lake,
Whose waves reflect the azure sky.

Girl of the polished brow, awake!
Let not my lyre be struck in vain;
Oh! since 't is swept for thee, partake
The tribute of its humble strain.

Girl of the rosy cheek, appear!
And hearken to my pleading lyre;
Wake, lovely girl! and lend thine ear
To the low tremblings of its wire.

Girl of the ruby lip! one smile
Can make thy minstrel's life-blood glow
With thrilling rapture, and beguile
His constant heart of half its woe.

Alas! the morn on eager wings
Is soaring through the twilight grey;
Hush, hush thy low and timid strings,
Cease, cease my lyre, thy feeble lay.

I MET HER AT A RUSTIC BALL.

I MET her at a rustic ball,
The fairest gem that graced the hall!
As fairy-like she flitted by,
With graceful mien and beaming eye,
I gazed upon the lovely maid;
She caught that look, and half afraid
Returned methought a timid glance,
Which did not chide that first advance.
When in the dance her hand I pressed,
What fond emotions filled my breast!
My beating heart with rapture burned,
I felt the pressure half-returned!
Her thoughts were pictured in her face,
And innocence, her sweetest grace.
I sought her father's humble cot,
And all my splendid dreams forgot
Of wealth and grandeur, pomp and pride,
Whilst seated by his daughter's side.
Far from vain fashion's noisy haunts,
And freed from all luxurious wants,
Which virtuous minds have oft beguiled,
The good old man had reared his child.
I loved her from my inmost soul
With passion which disdained control;
She listened to my urgent suit,
And answered though her lips were mute.
The modest blush, — averted eye, —
The falling tear, — the trembling sigh,

More than cold words *could* do, betrayed
Approval from the cottage maid.
If hearts, all free from useless care,
If ruddy health and bounteous fare,
And gratitude to Him who showers
These blessings upon us and ours,
Can joy and heavenly bliss reveal, —
We own that joy, — that bliss we feel.

MORNING IN THE BAY.

The maiden blush of twilight's spring,
Hath tinged the azure sky;
The grateful lark, on mounting wing,
Now sings her praise on high.

The silver stream without a wave,
That speeds its brilliant way,
Those clustered isles of green to lave,
Is bright with dawning day.

The graceful gull with pinions wide
Now floats upon the air,
Now glides along the peaceful tide
And sees her image there.

On snow-white wings, with lightning speed,
In vain the sea-bird tries
Her own fair shadow to exceed
That glides in mimic skies.

NATURE'S ALTARS.

'T is well to rear a temple to the Lord,
'T is well to listen in that holy fane
To the mild precepts of his sacred word,
Which dry pale sorrow's tears, and still her pain.
There oft the choral song in bliss hath poured
Its softest notes, like drops of fruitful rain,
To heal the wounds which rankle in the soul,
And hold o'er yielding hearts a soft control.

'T is well to kneel within that holy place,
And offer up our vows before its shrine,
Where falls, like Hermon's dew, God's peerless grace
Upon the souls which thirst for things divine;
There we prepare to run the heavenly race,
While round our hearts celestial glories twine,
There silver hope invites the soul to rise,
And soar to calmer, fairer, happier skies.

But still my favorite altars are abroad,
Beneath the outstretched canopy of blue,
Where warbling birds and murmuring brooks afford
Melodious harmony. The verdant hue,
Which decks the clustering leaves and emerald sod,
Is still the same as when frail man first knew
Their loveliness. Still flow the sparkling rills
As they did then, — still bloom the vales and hills.

Beneath this sky and on these hills I 've viewed,
Nature, thy altars; and have felt devotion
At dawn, at noon, at twilight's solitude;
In the dim distance heard the mighty ocean,
While 'neath my feet did wave the rocking wood;
Here my wrapt soul has glowed with deep emotion,
And here no secular care would check the flow
Of thoughts made holy by devotion's glow.

I 've loved thy altars, nature, from a child
I 've loved thy wildest flowers, and loved the shore,
Where ocean casts his unfledged wavelets wild,
In boyhood's hour have praised the crest he wore
Upon his snowy billows, and beguiled
Full many a listening hour by his roar.
Then faith would point above to peaceful skies
And bid a grateful offering arise.

DAYS OF BOYHOOD.

Careless boyhood! when the heart
  Beat with rapture pure and free,
Ere the tear-drop learnt to start,
  Ere the doom of misery
Fell upon its victim's head,
Happy boyhood! thou art fled.

Blooming boyhood! when the cheek
  Glowed with healthful, roseate hue,
When the beaming eye would speak
  Bliss, undimmed with sorrow's dew,
Save what feeling bade to flow
In sympathy for others' woe.

Peaceful boyhood! when the brow
  Showed no trace of grief or care, —
Dreamt not that so soon 't would bow
  Pale and withered by despair,
Ere the heart, by anguish torn,
Felt forsaken, — thou art gone.

Laughing boyhood! golden days!
  On thy page of banished joys
Weeping memory loves to gaze;
  Many an hour she thus employs,
Wishing, but alas! in vain,
Days of boyhood back again.

ADIEU, OLD HALLS.

Adieu, old halls! the glad-eyed throng
No longer gathers round your hearth,
No more is heard the morning's song,
No more is heard the evening's mirth.
We saw our hearth-fire ebbing low,
Our joyance seek oblivion's wave,
No arm of help to ward the blow
Was offered, and none sought to save;
Our fate was met with tearless eye, —
Though weeping came the menial train,
And gave the boon of sympathy,
And *wished* to save, alas, in vain.

The whirlwind, which uproots the tree
That spreads its lofty limbs in air,
And spurns to bow, all scornfully, —
The sapling and the vine will spare.
My sire was like that stubborn tree
Stern and unbending to the last;
With eye undimmed and pulses free,
He shrunk not at the withering blast;
But bared his bosom to the gale
With haughty heart which scorned to quail.
I saw the lofty hero bleed
In silence, but his woes are o'er;
The horseman of the snowy steed
Has borne him to the sable shore.

My father's halls ! a last adieu !
  My course is o'er the sparkling wave ;
The breath which here my being drew
  Must seek in death a distant grave.
Thou, ancient vault, wilt not entomb
  My line's last scion ; and no knell
O'er these loved grounds will peal my doom ; —
  My native land, my home, farewell.

'T IS SWEET TO SEE THE MELLOW HUE.

'T is sweet to see the mellow hue
  Of morning's twilight sky,
When flowers are decked with pearly dew,
  " Like tears in beauty's eye " ;
But greater joy it gives to me
  To hear the ocean roar,
Like ponderous artillery
  Along the sounding shore,
And see the screaming sea-bird lave
Her pinions grey in some bright wave.

WITHIN A CORAL GROVE.

Within a coral grove
Beneath the dark blue sea,
Where crystal waters rove
In native wildness free,
Two lovers sleep:
Young Peris to their bower
Bring many a wild sea-flower,
And o'er them weep.

There oft at sunny noon,
The nymphs are seen to glide,
And, when the yellow moon
Sheds o'er the radiant tide
Her mellow rays, —
They whisper round the bed
Of the fair and youthful dead
Their plaintive lays.

Wake, fair ones, from this sleep,
This long, long sleep of death;
Oh, quit the lonely deep,
And drink the genial breath
Of yonder skies;
Oh, leave the silent grave
Of the ocean's whelming wave,
Awake, arise!

And wing your eager flight,
On clouds of fragrant dew,
To realms of joyous light
Above our home of blue
In endless day;
No longer linger here,
Sleepers, mount to yon bright sphere,
Now, now away!

TO A LADY WEEPING.

The deepest ice that ever froze,
Can only o'er the surface close,—
The living stream lies quick below,
And flows and cannot cease to flow. — *Byron.*

The bleeding heart disdains to own,
By word or look, its secret pain,
When pride has o'er the surface thrown
Its cold and adamantine chain.
The rushing, gloomy tide of grief,
Within the hidden depths of mind,
All vainly struggles for relief,
Which prisoned sorrow ne'er can find.

But when the warm and melting ray
Of sympathy shall o'er it glow,
The ice of pride will melt away,
And rid the heart of half its woe.
Then, Lady, let not pride conceal
Thy secret cause of grief; — to me,
As to a brother — all reveal, —
A brother I will be to thee.

THE GATHERING STORM.

A FEARFUL storm is gathering near,
And wakes to wrath the sleeping surge,
Harsh thunder thrills the murky sphere,
And lightning leaps from verge to verge.

The seas are white with sparkling foam,
The beacon-lights burn dim, afar;
God shield the mariners, who roam
To-night without one guiding star.

Now darkness wears a deeper hue,
And widely spreads its dusky wings,
It veils the jewelled arch of blue,
And o'er the earth its shadow flings.

LINES TO * * *.

I MINGLE with the careless gay,
  And join them in the shout of glee,
And seem awhile as free as they
  From all the spells of misery.
But when the votive glass they fill,
  And each is called to pledge "the fair";
Deep in my heart I feel a thrill
  Which chides me for remaining there.

Secreted in my inmost soul,
  There purely burns a hidden flame;
My lips obey its mute control,
  And dare not breathe thy vestal name.
Then, if I met thy searching eye, —
  When flows the rosy flood of wine,
'T would mark the struggling bosom-sigh,
  Which bids the tear-drop rush to mine.

I drain the sparkling goblet dry,
  And aid the laugh that wit gives birth,
But none who view my sunken eye
  Can envy this my frenzied mirth.
'T is then I feel shame's crimson power,
  While wandering from the road to Heaven,
And brood in anguish o'er the hour
  Which saw me from thy favor driven.

AUTUMN LEAVES.

Pale, trembling wanderers of the yellow plain,
  Tost to and fro, and scattered by the breeze
Which hymns aloud its hollow requiem-strain,
  Amid the solitude of leafless trees, —
Ye claim a sympathy within each breast,
Which seeks, and vainly seeks, departed rest.

Bright, gladsome Spring and Summer are no more,
  Silence hath hushed the tiny insect's hum,
The feathered choir have sought a milder shore,
  And all the forest minstrelsy is dumb;
Like faithless lovers, reckless of their vows,
They left ye withering on the parent boughs.

Once ye were radiant with emerald hues,
  And sported in the fragrant zephyr's breath,
And drank the genial draft of evening dews;
  But ye have felt the frigid grasp of death;
The hallowed voice that called ye into birth
Now bids ye mingle with the faded earth.

I feel a kindred, melancholy sense
  Steal o'er me, as I view the Autumn waste;
For 't is an emblem of a heart from whence
  All peace is banished, and all joy effaced,
Which, deeply seared by sorrow's blighting spell,
To this bleak world would gladly bid farewell.

ST. HELENA.

A DITHYRAMBIC ODE.

Lone, solitary rock !
Encircled by the lucid zone
Of the eternal ocean, —
How dost thou mock,
With thy opposing breast, the wild commotion
And the hollow moan
Of his white-crested waves
Which dash beneath thy flinty caves.
Thou art
The everlasting monument of Albion's shame !
She dared immure the mightiest of a thousand years, —
The master-spirit which she could not tame,
Napoleon Bonaparte, —
Who sought, in peace, her shores, — *a guest !*
To die within thy gloomy isle.
O boasted " ruler of the waves,"
What boding fears
Possessed thy craven breast,
That thou couldst stoop to deed so vile ?
The sounding caves
Of this bleak, isolated spot
Reverberate the foul disgrace,
Which all thy former glory cannot blot,
Nor future deeds efface.
But thou ! rude, lonely grave,
The ocean's adamantine gem,

Art blest in Albion's fall;
Thus tarnishing her diadem,
She gave,
What she can ne'er recall,
To thee
An immortality!
The noble warrior's last request,
"To sleep in death with those he loved so well,"
Denied!
He takes his rest
In a secluded valley by a fountain's side;
Above his grave the bending willows moan
A hallowed knell!
He sleeps without the mockery of sculptured stone.

TO ADA, IN TEARS.

My gentle girl, I see the tears,
The pearly tears, in thy dark eyes,
And see thee strive with modest fears
To hide thy grief, — and quell thy sighs.
Methinks you seem like some fair flower,
More lovely, bathed in morning dew,
Than when in sunshine's happier hour
It glows in all its native hue.
When the resplendent orb of day
Sinks slowly in the western main,
His mellow tints and lingering ray,
Though veiled awhile, return again;
So may the smiles, which once were seen
On thy young lip in sportive play,
Beam forth again with radiant gleam
More charming in their new-born ray.

CONTENTMENT.

I DO not wish for hoarded wealth, —
  Let others delve for golden ore ;
Blest with a competence and health,
  And virtue's peace, I ask no more.
Seasons will cease, and orbs sublime,
  Which cheer the gloom of sable night,
Must sink beneath the tide of time,
  Whose whelming waves shall quench their light.
But the light pinions of the soul
  Will still pursue their onward way,
Beyond the verge of time's control,
  And bask in everlasting day.
Oh ! when I leave life's dreary night,
  By withering care or years opprest,
There may I wing my eager flight,
  And find a calm, eternal rest.

THE STEERSMAN'S SONG.

Speedily, lads, now ply your blades,
  Yon waning sun is low;
Heartily pull, the twilight shades
  Are darkening as we row.
Sturdily dash the dripping oar
  Beneath the yielding tide;
Haste, lads, haste, till to the shore
  Our fairy bark doth glide.
Now mark how o'er the limpid waves
  She speeds her gallant way;
The gurgling, foaming water laves
  Her bounding prow with spray.
Shout! lads, shout! we 've gained the shore;
  Hurra! hurra! our task is o'er!

SEA REQUIEM.

Lost victims of the surge!
  Rest in your quiet graves,
For you the only dirge
  Is the ocean's moaning waves.
Within the shady bowers
Which gem the mighty deep,
  On beds of flowers
    Sleep!

Dream the calm dream of death,
  And leave not that still mound
    On which ye sleep,
Until the awakening breath
  Of the last trump shall sound,
To bid the deep-blue waves
Release from their crystal caves
    The dead.

When it sounds, lift your eyes
Up to heaven's radiant skies;
Sleepers! your glad pinions spread,
Which relentless death has bound;
Victims of the sea, awake!
  And from your eyes
Death's gloomy bandage take,—
    Then arise!

THE MADONNA. *(Sasso Ferrato.)*

ATHENÆUM GALLERY.

I LOVE to gaze upon thy heavenly face,
And on the petals of thy downcast orbs,
And in my warm and visioned fancy trace
The dove-descending spirit, that absorbs
All earthly passions from thy heavenly mind,
And humbly strive, like thee, to bow resigned.

E'en now amid this gay and beauteous throng,
Vocal with cheerfulness and bright with joy,
My wearied spirit drags its chain along,
And struggling feels humanity's alloy;
I turn in tears from living beauty's shrine
To gaze upon thy features so divine.

Mother of Christ! oh! I could lowly kneel,
And bow my haughty spirit into prayer,
And let devotion's dew-like tribute steal
O'er my subdued soul; and meekly dare,
All erring as I feel, to catch from thee
A ray-like vision of eternity!

'T is no idolatry; — an angel beams
From out the breathing canvass, and reveals
The placid meekness of those heavenly dreams,
That calm the bleeding convert whom she heals.
Then let me worship; — not that imaged face, —
But the calm purity which there I trace!

THE MOTHER'S FAREWELL.

"First partings form a lesson hard to learn." *Byron.*

The orb of day rose slowly from the sea,
Gilding the orient with burnished gold,
And gladly smiling on the leaping waves.
A swan-like cloud that gemmed the azure arch
Blushed as he beamed upon it, like a maid
That coyly crimsons 'neath her lover's gaze.
I stood an idler on the silent quay;
'T was Sabbath morning, and a stately bark
Was proudly floating on the sparkling sea,
With white wings fluttering in the early breeze,
Like a fleet steed, impatient of delay.
A mother and her son were on the shore,
"Farewell" upon their silent lips still lingered,
And strove in vain for utterance. At length
The mother grasped her boy's all-nerveless hand,
And with a faltering voice addressed him thus: —

"Good-bye, my child; a long, long lapse of time
Will join the past ere we may meet again;
I look around upon this scene sublime,
The blushing sky, the blue and sparkling main,
And yon bright orb, without my wonted joy;
I cannot bear to part with thee, my boy!

"Thy course is o'er the ocean; but the Power,
Who framed the fabric of the mighty deep,

Will still protect thee in the storm's rude hour,
And o'er thy youthful form his vigils keep;
It is not doubt of *that* which clouds my brow,
'T is nature's yearnings which so move me now.

"I gaze upon thee with a mingled joy;
For blended in thy lineaments I trace
The features of thy manly sire, my boy;
His mild expression beams upon thy face,
And his rich music-tone was like thy voice, —
Oft it has made my widowed heart rejoice.

"But we must part, and I may list in vain
The cheerful carol of that voice to hear;
When next the morning light shall dawn again,
Fair nature's music will not charm my ear;
For thou, my child, wilt then be far away,
And I must weep thy absence day by day.

"At morning, noon, and evening, at the board
Where once were smiles, the tear of grief will start;
And where the stated orison is poured,
Another vacant seat will chill my heart;
Do not, my child, thy mother's weakness scorn, —
Thy father dies again when thou art gone!"

The young man raised his head, and looked upon
The pale and tearful visage of his mother;
In vain he strives to speak; one effort more,
And feeling freely yields her dewy gush.
His young arms twine around her, like the vine
That closely clasps the tree. I turned away;
Anon the boatswain's whistle, and the 'Yo-heave-ho!'
Came shrilly to the shore; the snowy sails
Received the breeze, and soon the noble bark
Flew like a sea-bird to the distant verge.

TO THE OFFING WATERS.

'T is not when mild zephyrs play here,
  Breathing fragrance and music around,
'T is not when the heavens are clear,
  Nor when silence hath hushed every sound, —
'T is not when thy surface is still,
  When summer-birds over thee glide,
That sympathy causes a thrill
  In him who now looks on thy tide.

'T is when the storm-spirit is here,
  And spreads his dark veil o'er the skies,
When the mariner's heart beats with fear,
  As to Heaven imploring he cries ;
'T is then in my bark I launch forth
  To mark the wild waves as they dash,
To list to the loud thunder's wrath,
  And gaze on the red lightning's flash.

To the moan of each billow that laves
  Round my bark with a requiem tone,
When in madness the turbulent waves
  In the wildest commotion are thrown, —
To the war of the sea and the air,
  Whose fury an emblem portrays
Of my own tempest-sea of despair,
  My heart-strings respond as I gaze.

MY HALLS, THE HOME OF PEACE, TILL THOU.

My halls, the home of peace, till thou
  Mock image of thy Maker came,
Are so no more; come view them now,
  The lonely, tearful home of shame.
There joy's bright harp is heard no more,
  For grief hath rent each golden string;
Thy victim's dream of bliss is o'er,
  A poor, forsaken, guilty thing.
Go, villain! join gay fashion's maze,
  And pledge new vows at beauty's shrine;
On others fix thy serpent gaze,
  And blast their hopes, as thou hast mine.
Go, boast thy too successful love,
  And, if thou *canst*, my wrongs forget;
But know, there is a God above,
  Whose righteous arm will reach thee yet!

THINE EYES OF BLUE.

THINE eyes of blue, thine eyes of blue,
Which silken lashes sweetly fringe,
Are bright and fair as morning dew
That steals from heaven a sapphire tinge.

While gazing on them once I thought,
If thou, Calanthe, only knew
The passion which their charms had wrought,
Thou 'dst veil from me thine eyes of blue.

Quick as the thought I turned away,
But memory dwelt upon their hue;
And fancy saw an imaged ray
Still gleaming from thine eyes of blue.

With trembling fear I raised again
My eyes to thine, and there they grew;
And, though they met thy cold disdain,
Still feasted on thine eyes of blue.

And then I saw an angry glow,
Which thy fair cheek was stranger to,
Empurple all the pearly snow
That dazzled round thine eyes of blue.

A frown came o'er thy polished brow,
And from thine eyes bright flashes flew;

But still I gazed (I could not now
To pain thee) on thine eyes of blue.

But when, Calanthe, thou didst see
Repentant tears my cheek bedew,
How quickly did thy anger flee,
And pity grace thine eyes of blue.

ALETHE AND ALCIPHRON.

"Thy faith, Alethe, shall, from this hour, be mine ; and I will live and die in this desert with thee ! "

Moore's Epicurean.

'T is evening ; down the gleaming Nile
A swan-like yacht is seen to glide,
The silver moon doth sweetly smile,
And zephyrs whisper to the tide.
That fairy yacht moves gently on, —
Upon her deck two forms are seen,
Alethe and young Alciphron,
Gazing upon the water's sheen.

See ! now 't is moored, and bound its sail,
Beneath the barren " mount of birds ; "
Why does the maiden's cheek grow pale ?
Her young lips move, but breathe no words.
List ! now her trembling voice is heard, --
" Here, Alciphron, alas, we part.
Farewell ! I shudder at the word,
And feel the burning tear-drops start.

" But we *must* part : -- an infidel
Who scorns his God can ne'er be mine !
Drink thirstily from truth's pure well,
And e'en on earth taste joys divine ;
Then after death to yon bright throne
Together we will wing our flight,
And thou shalt be, O Alciphron,
A jewel in my crown of light."

"Stay, stay Alethe! from this hour,
Thy God and faith shall aye be mine;
I will confess no other power,
Nor kneel at any other shrine:
Here in this desert we will live,
Together we will pray and kneel;
Thy God shall all my sins forgive,
And to my soul his light reveal!"

TO * * *

I LOVE thee when the first faint ray
Of morning gilds the orient verge,
And love thee when the god of day
Begins his glorious steeds to urge.

In his meridian pride on high,
I still do love, and love but thee,
And love thee when he leaves the sky
To shroud his beauties in the sea.

But when the stars of night are out,
So emblematic of thine eyes,
My love for thee is more devout,
And purer are my fervent sighs.

When death's twin-brother, quiet sleep,
In his soft arms encircles me,
Thine image still I firmly keep,
And love thee then, and love but thee.

I love but thee, — I love but thee,
There is no other I *can* love,
Upon the shore, or on the sea,
Where'er thou art, — where'er I rove.

At Sea, 1832.

COLUMBUS.

Written after visiting the Cathedral, at Havana, in the vaults of which the remains of Columbus are interred.

"When some proud son of man returns to earth,
Unknown to glory, but upheld by birth,
The sculptor's art exhausts the pomp of woe,
And storied urns record who rests below;
When all is done, upon the tomb is seen,
Not what he *was*, but what he should have been."

When some proud hero yields his breath,
And bows him to the victor — Death,
What tribute does a nation bring,
Or deem a proper offering?
'T is this: — the sculptor's plastic art
Bids his full form from marble start,
Which seems almost a thing of life,
Graced with the panoply of strife.
The bards his mighty conquests sing,
And maidens fragrant garlands bring,
To deck the fallen hero's grave
Whom leech's skill hath failed to save.

We seek the honors paid the brave
In vain, o'er great Columbus' grave;
Beneath a mouldering church's shrine
His sacred ashes now repose;
In vain we seek for outward sign
That to the stranger may disclose
That here his relics rest; —
Unhonored, but not quite *forgot*,
This, great Columbus, is thy lot,
Discoverer of the West!

Yet would the work of art's frail hand
Be mockery to thy deathless fame;
For it is graven on the land,
The happy land, that bears thy name;
It need not fear oblivion's doom,
It lives, and shall for aye endure;
This lovely island is thy tomb,
A continent thy tablature!

Havana, Feb. 1832.

TO INEZ.

Adieu, adieu, dark-eyed brunette!
Thy pearly tears with mine flow fast;
The first sad hour since we met,
Is fitly destined for the last.

What tho' a different tongue from mine,
Hath set a bar to oral speech?
Thy warbling words have power divine
To love's quick ear their sense to teach.

We part, perchance to meet no more;
Yet when I launch upon the main,
And view the Moro's lessening shore
Which I may ne'er behold again, —

The hope, that I may cherished be
In thy young heart, will give me joy;
While memory's page that speaks of thee,
Thy charms, thy love — shall hours employ.

What boots it now to speak of bliss,
Which ne'er again may glad my heart?
Those joyous hours are dimmed by this,
The tearful hour in which we part!

Havana, May 1832.

HAMLET'S GRAVE.

Written upon a visit to Hamlet's grave at Elsineur, Denmark, 4th July, 1832.

HERE Denmark's Prince reposes. O'er his grave,
As with a buried friend, I claim acquaintance,
A long familiar, melancholy friend,
For whose sad woes my tears have oft been shed.
Perchance his bones here still unmouldered lie;
Were but this turf upturned, I too might say
"Alas! poor *Hamlet!* I have known thee well!"
How beautiful is all the scene around;
A delicate green is on the smiling hills,
And the blue Baltic sparkles in the sun.
In the short distance is the Swedish shore,
By heavens, a lovely view! castles and spires,
White cottages, and hills, and dales, and woods.
This atmosphere the melancholy prince
Breathed with his "fair Ophelia"; here he bade
The lovely nymph remember him in prayer.
Ah! cruel he, to break her gentle heart
With his unkindness,—madden her young brain,
And cause the lovely plant to droop and die,
Finding her bark of love thus wrecked and lost.

Elsineur, 1832.

TO ——

'T IS said that time, and absence, proves
The strength of bonds by love entwined,
And that the heart, which truly loves,
Needs not a token to remind.
Yet one whose heart is wholly thine,
Who proudly claims, as his, thy heart,

Now kneels before thy beauty's shrine,
While to his eyes the tear-drops start,
And begs thee not to spurn away
This simple pledge, — a pledge of love,
Of love which never can decay,
Which other charms can never move.

St. Petersburg, August, 1832.

TO ——

Adieu, Lezinka ! fare thee well !
I leave thee with a bursting heart ;
'T is not for words, cold words, to tell
How much it pains me to depart.

The city of the Czar I leave,
To hear no more " those evening bells " ; *
But not for them, — for thee I grieve,
For thee alone my bosom swells.

I almost wish we ne'er had met,
Since we, alas ! so soon must part ;
I say " Farewell," but linger yet
Again to fold thee to my heart ;

Again to gaze upon thy face,
To glad me in thy mild blue eye ;
And in thy speaking features trace
The soul's " unwritten " minstrelsy.

Farewell ! a last, a wild farewell,
A last embrace and it is o'er ;
Vain words, — the heart alone can tell
The grief with which I leave thy shore.

St. Petersburg, Sept. 1832.

* " Those Evening Bells," Moore's beautiful lines on hearing the bells of St. Petersburg.

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